

TUNISIA, LIBYA, SYRIA, AND  
YEMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, the changes in the Arabic-speaking countries over the last year have been astonishing. This region, which is home to over 300 million people, has been making unmistakable drives toward democracy, but those drives have not always been linear and smooth. There have been setbacks in advances. But as this region changes, the United States must also adjust to those changes as well.

First, I want to congratulate the people of Tunisia on their historic election on Sunday. It was Tunisia's first free and fair election since gaining independence in 1956. Tunisians created a new paradigm for governance in the Middle East, and I hope this is replicated throughout the region. Tunisia, by the way, was the first country to begin its dramatic social change against a historic dictator.

Last December, Tunisians said, "Enough." They took to the streets to demand their rights, and they ousted a dictator and went to the polls just a few days ago to elect new leaders. More than 90 percent of registered voters turned out to vote—that's 90 percent. Long lines snaked down sidewalks and around street corners. People waited for hours to exercise their right to vote that had been denied to them for more than 50 years.

It was also a well-deserved victory for a country that gave birth to the Arab Spring. Tunisians started a democratic movement that is slowly transforming dictatorships into democracies. The changes that are taking place in Libya are also irreversible. I don't celebrate the death of anyone, even a person as bad as Qadhafi, but Libya is certainly better off without Muammar Qadhafi. I am glad that the Transitional National Council will investigate the circumstances of his death, but the fact that he is off the scene gives Libya a new chance and a new lease on life.

For 42 years, Qadhafi ruled Libya with brutal force and criminal neglect. The country cannot afford more conflict. It should embark on a national reconciliation process similar to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa.

That's not easy for a country that has endured so much bloodshed. But Libyans now have the opportunity to lay down arms and come together. Libyans will decide for themselves what kind of country they want to build. The Libyan people must decide what kind of example they will set for other countries in the region.

I'd also like to turn attention to Iraq. I offer my congratulations to President Obama for keeping his promise to exit Iraq. No yellowcake uranium, no link between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, and no weapons of mass

destruction, and yet literally thousands of Americans' lives were lost, thousands of Iraqis' lives were lost, and perhaps \$1 trillion was lost. It's time to go. I congratulate President Obama in his decision to leave.

Syria's path toward change is also irreversible, but the outcomes are less certain. Bashar al-Assad's government has now killed over 3,000 people. Countless others have been raped and tortured. This is not the model that will characterize the region's future.

People like Tawakel Karman of Yemen are setting a new standard. Referred to as the "Mother of the Revolution" in Yemen, she recently won the Nobel Prize for her nonviolent activism, and I congratulate her.

As people across the Middle East and North Africa struggle for democracy, the United States should do all that it can to help them reach that democratic condition that we take for granted. As Americans, we will remember our own long struggle for freedom and should be at the waiting to help others secure their democratic future.

## JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that spoke previously. America needs to be a voice for freedom in the world. America is a great nation.

I find it interesting that we talk about the need to be engaged, with which I agree, but then we talk about the need to leave Iraq before we can know for a fact that we are leaving a very stable country.

□ 1010

I find it interesting people are rushing to the exits in Afghanistan, and I understand that's a tough and difficult war. But in the process, we have brought millions of people freedom; we've brought to women the ability to go to school; we've brought to people the ability to live their lives in freedom and not under an oppressed regime.

America is a great country. We are an amazing country that is a force for freedom in this world, and it's a country I am very proud of. Having served in the military and continuing to serve as a pilot in the Air National Guard, I understand that the people I serve with are part of that great country.

Right now one of the concerns in our country, though, is that, in order to back up and to support a great military and to support a great force for freedom, you have to have a great economy. What bothers me is that in 2009 in this Chamber a stimulus was passed which cost in just a few minutes of debate as much as the war in Iraq has cost in 8 years. In just a few minutes, we were promised that unemployment would not go above 8 percent, and, in fact, unemployment has never

gone below 8 percent since the passage of the stimulus.

But do you know what has gone up? Not employment. Debt and deficits, more and more of a burden that we're piling on our children.

Now the President is coming out with a plan that says we can't wait, that we can't wait to pass stimulus version 2. Really, if you look at the depths of what the jobs plan is, it's stimulus 2. It's, in essence, a carbon copy of stimulus 1 but a little bit smaller. I've heard people in this Chamber argue, actually, that the problem with the first stimulus is it wasn't large enough. Now, I disagree. I think that's the wrong answer, but let's say for a moment that that's right. Let's say the problem is it wasn't large enough. Why would you introduce a second stimulus that's even smaller and say, This is the miracle bullet right here, this is how we're going to pull ourselves out?

I don't know how many times we have to do the same thing over and over and over again until we realize it doesn't work. The American people are hurting. The definition of insanity, by the way, is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

House Republicans have a plan for America's job creators. We've had a plan for America and America's job creators and our economy for many, many months. Despite that people can get on television and say Republicans have no plan doesn't make it true. You're entitled to your own opinion, but you're not entitled to your own set of facts.

The fact is, at jobs.gop.gov, we have a plan. That plan includes empowering small business and reducing regulation on job creators but not to a dangerous level, as some on the other side of the aisle will have you believe that we want to take away all regulation. We don't. What we want to do is find that balance between allowing the free market to breathe and allowing people to come in and say, I want to hire people; I want to create more jobs; I don't need the heavy hand of government to come in and give me the permission to do what I'm doing.

We do have to fix the Tax Code. I think both sides of the aisle agree that there have to be Tax Code reparations go on to make it better and easier to do business. We have to boost competitiveness for American manufacturers. Look, American manufacturers aren't leaving because it's nicer in China and the weather is better. They're leaving because they simply can't afford to access the 95 percent of consumers who live outside of our country and do it competitively.

But with all these things, and, again, with the Republican plan for America's job creators, I think we have to acknowledge areas where we have found success and bipartisanship. One of those happened just a week ago when we passed the three trade agreements